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# Co-view

Co-view (or 'Collaborative Vision Exploration Workbench') is a tool to help facilitators of natural resource management and stakeholders to articulate and explore a shared vision of the future and to develop strategies to achieve it. Co-view aims to strengthen the link between visioning and modelling, by making it easier to use a visioning process as the entry point for modelling, and to use the results of simulation modelling to help to generate strategies for achieving the vision. Co-view consists of manuals on visioning and participatory modelling as well as two computer software packages: 'The Bridge' and 'Power to Change!' game and papers related to participatory modelling. The package also includes Simile, a powerful simulation-modelling environment. The Bridge is a visioning tool that helps users to define a vision and to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats so that the group can devise an appropriate strategy to achieve the vision. The 'Power to Change!' game is an interface within Simile, that allows participants the opportunity to 'experience' the impacts of changes they make to key variables in the virtual reality of the simulation model. The game provides opportunities for learning at low cost to the real world and very much quicker than is possible in real life. In multi-player versions of the game there are opportunities for group or social learning about how best to 'realise' shared visions.

## Resources and requirements

### Skills

- Facilitator.
- Computer Modeller.
- Other skills/roles useful include 'process coach' and 'gatekeeper'.

### Equipment

- Computer.
- Co-view software.
- Charts and cards.

### Time

- Anything between two and five days.
- It is important for the facilitator to observe when the participants start showing signs of fatigue; at that point the process can be adjourned.

### Costs

- Generally between £700 (covering venue and materials) and £6000 (covering facilitators' time).

## Level of engagement

INFORMING:

CONSULTING: ★

INVOLVING: ★★

PARTNERSHIP: ★★★

## Strengths

- Links visioning and modelling.
- Enables participants to express their perceptions of how the world around them works.
- Helps planning towards achieving vision and goals.

## Weaknesses

- Modelling can be complicated and the output very sensitive to assumptions.
- Need for computers can be restrictive in areas where computers are not available.
- The interface between the visioning and the model can be confusing.

## Useful sources of information

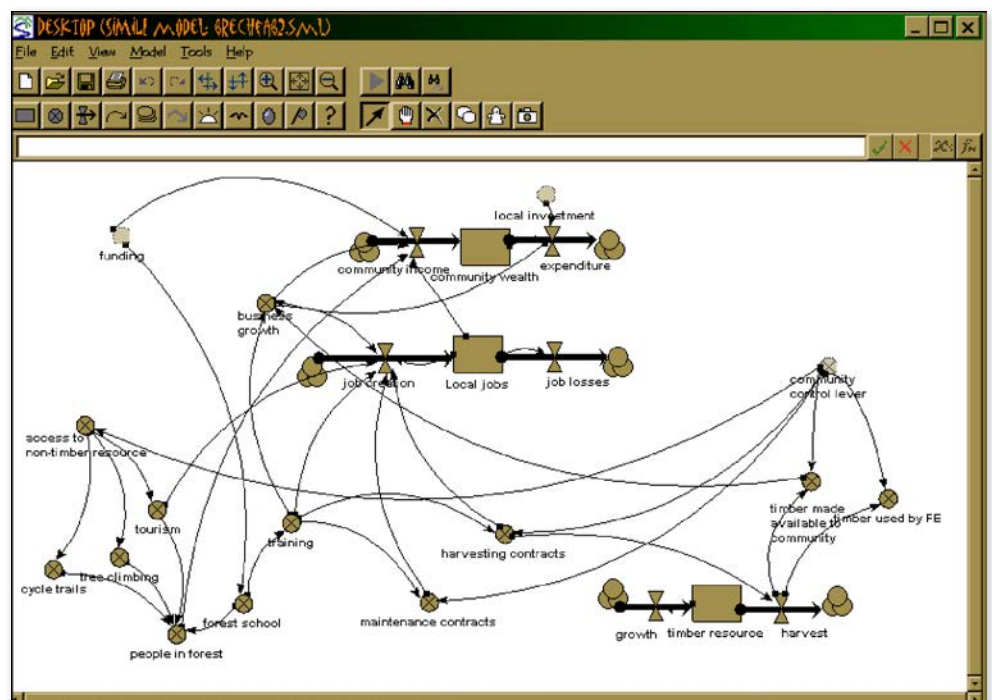
### Web

- Free downloads of the software and manual are available from:

[www.cifor.cgiar.org/acm/pub/co-view.html](http://www.cifor.cgiar.org/acm/pub/co-view.html)

### Case study

- A workshop was held in September 2002 to evaluate Co-view as a tool for helping rural communities around Brechfa Forest in Wales. A report on the workshop is available from Forestry Commission Wales, Aberystwyth (tel. 0300 068 0300).



An influence diagram of Brechfa forest developed by workshop participants and drawn with the Co-view software.



Workshop participants at Brechfa forest (Richard Nyirenda, CIFOR).

This toolbox is designed to assist Forestry Commission staff when they are considering which tools they could use to involve the public in the forest and woodland planning process. For more information please visit the website at: [www.forestry.gov.uk/toolbox](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/toolbox)